

ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL
June 22, 2009 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
National Louis University
122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago Atrium, Chicago, Illinois

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Awilda Adorno, Martha Arntson, Carol Auer, Barbara Bowman, Jeanna Capito, Mary Ellen Caron, Tim Carpenter, Martina Casey, Ellen Chavez (for Ann Alvarez), George Davis, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Phyllis Glink, Vinni Hall, Gloria Harris, Ava Harston, Kay Henderson, Eboni Howard, Colleen Jones, Chris Koch, Jennifer Kushto (for Lori Baas), Terri Lawrence, Suzanne Logan, Teresa Martin, Janet Maruna, Harriet Meyer, Janice Moenster, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Anthony Raden, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Gina Ruther, Linda Saterfield, Jodi Scott, Adele Simmons, Julie Smith, Luz Maria Solis, Teri Talan, Sheridan Turner, Mark Valentine, Kathy Villano, Judith Walker Kendrick, Deb Widenhofer (for Claudia Quigg), Maria Whelan, Kay Willmoth, Josie Yanguas

By phone: Grace Hou, Jaci Vaughn

Other: Karen Carradine, Gaylord Gieseke, Matthew Langer, Susie Morrison, Cass Wolfe

Absent: Robert Blade, Representative Elizabeth Coulson, Ric Estrada, Representative Deborah Graham, Senator Don Harmon, Michael Johnson, James Kaplan, Trinita Logue, Barry Maram, Mark McHugh, Cordelia Meyer, Geoff Obrzut, Sylvia Puente, Barbara Quinn, Sara Slaughter

AGENDA

11:00 - 11:10
(10 mins)

Plan for the Day

(Harriet Meyer)

- Introductions
- Adoption of February 2009 meeting minutes

Harriet Meyer welcomed Early Learning Council members and asked for members to introduce themselves. Harriet formally introduced Julie Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Pat Quinn, as the new co-chair of the Council. Harriet also thanked Elliot Regenstein for his years of service to the Council as co-chair and stated that Elliot will continue on the Council as a member and as the co-chair of the Data Work Group. Harriet reviewed the agenda for the day's meeting. Harriet then asked members to review the minutes from the February 23, 2009 Early Learning Council meeting. Vinni Hall moved to accept the minutes, and Maria Whelan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Early Learning Council Fiscal Year 2009 Report

Harriet reminded members that the Council is required by statute to report each year to the governor and General Assembly on the activities of the Council. She asked members to review the draft Fiscal Year 2009 Early Learning Council report. Sheridan Turner moved to accept the report, and Jan Maruna seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11:10 – 11:35
(25 mins)

Updates

(Julie Smith)

- Budget Crisis

Julie Smith led a discussion on the state's budget crisis. She stated that the governor is firmly committed to getting the General Assembly to act on creating new revenue. She stated that they will need to work together

to address the state's \$9.5 billion shortfall. Judith Walker Kendrick expressed her worry that programs do not know how to move forward, and that programs will not be able to absorb the costs of the cuts – or the cost of waiting for funding – and that services for working parents are in jeopardy. Maria Whelan stated that community programs are not the only ones feeling the cut – Illinois is planning to cut over \$4 billion from state agencies, when Illinois already ranks last in number of state workers per capita. Grace Hou stated that she estimates that, in addition to the layoffs of state workers she will be forced to make, over 175,000 community agency staff may lose their jobs. Kay Henderson estimated that over 7,000 Early Childhood Block Grant staff could lose their jobs under the current budget proposal. Maria commented that in its role as an advisory body, she suggests that the Council recommend to the governor that he veto the current budget proposal. Julie stated that more than 80 House members voted for the revenue needed to fund the capital plan, but only 42 voted for the income tax increase. Elliot Regenstein suggested creating a statement about the impact of the budget on the early childhood system, and other members agreed stating that the long-term impact of early childhood investments should be mentioned. Maria Whelan moved that the Council create a statement detailing the impact of the budget cuts to early childhood and urging the governor to veto the budget bill. Barbara Bowman seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously except for an abstention from Kay Willmoth. Harriet stated that Council staff would create a draft statement and circulate it for comments.

- Birth to Five Evaluation (Eboni Howard)

Eboni Howard provided an update on the activities of the Illinois Birth to Five Evaluation. Please see the attached summary of the Evaluation for information.

11:35 – 12:05
(30 mins)

Recommendations and Reports

(Harriet Meyer)

- Recommendation: Professional Development and Career Task Force (Jan Maruna)

Jan Maruna presented a recommendation that the governor name the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) as the Professional Development and Career Task Force (see attached recommendation and fact sheet). Jan stated that The Higher Education Act calls for the governor of a state to create or designate a body to act as a Professional Development and Career Task Force to improve the quality of the early childhood education workforce. The task force will coordinate with the Early Learning Council and examine issues such as pathways to credentials and degrees, articulation agreements, and staff compensation

After the recommendation was presented, Barbara Bowman expressed concern that PDAC does not currently have representation from the Chicago Public Schools. Teri Talan stated that the membership of PDAC can change as guidance becomes available. Maria Whelan moved to approve the recommendation, and Martha Arntson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Recommendation: Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

Harriet Meyer explained that a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council was convened in May to discuss the opportunities for Council funding available through the stimulus act. She stated that funding would provide support for initiatives and for Council staffing and coordination. Harriet stated that the Ounce has played a coordinating role for the Council for over five years, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding represents an opportunity to place the staffing and coordination of the Council within the Governor's Office. The Executive committee recommended that the governor create an Office of Early Childhood Development that would be housed in his office. Harriet commented that this would allow a high-level staff person to take on Council coordination while maintaining the public-private partnership through committee staffing, as currently four agencies staff committees of the Council. Most staffing agencies have received support for that work from the Grand Victoria Foundation. Harriet thanked the Grand Victoria Foundation for their support of the Council's work. Harriet also stated that creating an Office of Early Childhood Development would serve to elevate early childhood issues and signal the importance of early childhood to both the members of the General Assembly and the administrators of state agencies and allow for staff to really work on the implementation of recommendations and initiatives across systems.

Gaylord Gieseke moved that the Council approve the recommendation to the governor for the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development. Ava Harston seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- Report: Home Visiting Task Force Implementation Plan (Gaylord Gieseke and Diana Rauner)

Gaylord Gieseke reported on the activities of the Home Visiting Task Force. She stated that the group created and submitted an implementation plan for the federal Strong Foundations grant, which was awarded to Illinois to assist in creating infrastructure for home visiting programs in the state. Gaylord reviewed the work groups that have been formed by the task force to accomplish its goals.

- Report: Head Start State Collaboration Office Needs Assessment (Gina Ruthner)

Gina Ruthner provided a report on the Head Start State Collaboration Office needs assessment process. Please see the attached summary for information. Gina reminded the Council that the plan based on the assessment is due in October and offered to update the Council on the results of the needs assessment.

12:05 – 12:25 **Information** (Harriet Meyer)
(20 mins)

- Chicago Program Evaluation Project (Anthony Raden and Karen Carradine)

Anthony Raden and Karen Carradine provided a summary of the Chicago Program Evaluation Project. The Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services partnered with the McCormick Foundation and the Erikson Institute to support the Chicago Program Evaluation Project - C-PEP. This study of the programs offered by CPS and FSS is the largest study ever conducted of a local mixed-delivery early care and education system. Please see attached summaries for information.

12:25 – 12:55 **Discussion** (Julie Smith)
(30 mins)

- Kindergarten Readiness Assessments (Chris Koch)

State Superintendent Christopher Koch informed the Council that he has had conversations on the national level regarding the movement towards using kindergarten readiness assessments. He mentioned that the National Goals Panel suggests the use of assessments to assess readiness for kindergarten. He stated that Illinois joined the American Diploma Project, and is working backwards from college/career readiness measures and sees early childhood as a part of that continuum. He reassured members that he is not in favor of using assessments as a way to institute high stakes testing of young children, and sees kindergarten readiness assessments as a tool to help to bridge early childhood and the K – 12 system. Superintendent Koch mentioned that he will be convening a planning group to take a deeper look at the opportunities for Illinois. Awilda Adorno mentioned that the needs of English language learners should be examined when the group meets to discuss readiness assessments. Julie Smith pointed out that this work could intersect with the work being done around early childhood data systems. Diana Rauner mentioned that the information gleaned from assessments would be useful to help document gaps in achievement.

- State Early Childhood Advisory Council Grant Priorities

Julie reminded Council members that they received a survey last week asking for input for the grant that is available through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for the support of State Early Learning Advisory Councils. The survey asked you to rank the activities of State Early Learning Advisory Councils as stated in the Head Start Act. Julie stated that the members' feedback has helped to establish the funding priorities that the Governor's Office will include when writing the grant. Julie commented that more than \$3.58 million dollars is available over three years to Illinois to support our Council. Julie stated that staffing costs for the recommended Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, which would be responsible for Council coordination, as well as the costs for staffing the committees would be also be supported by this

funding in conjunction with private funding. Julie pointed out the results of the survey, and stated that the top items were the activities focused on increasing participation, collaboration and coordination, and data-systems. Elliot Regenstein stated that the Council should also be aware of what other funding opportunities may exist for priorities, and offered to reach out to ISBE to learn what other data systems opportunities there might be to help in establishing recommended funding amounts regarding data systems activities. Maria Whelan reminded the Council of the 70% match for the funds, and asked that that be communicated to the governor, reminding him of the potential lost opportunities for federal funding if early childhood state funding is cut. Julie stated that the Governor's Office will convene a planning group that will work to include in the grant the priorities identified by the Council, and will ask members for feedback on the drafts they create.

12:55 – 1:00
(5 mins)

Wrap up

(Harriet Meyer)

Harriet Meyer thanked members for their participation, and thanked the McCormick Foundation for providing lunch for the meeting. Ava Harston moved to adjourn the meeting, and Luz Maria Solis seconded. The motion passed unopposed.